



Remembering and Revisiting the Lost Villages of the Aleutians

Rachel Mason

National Park Service

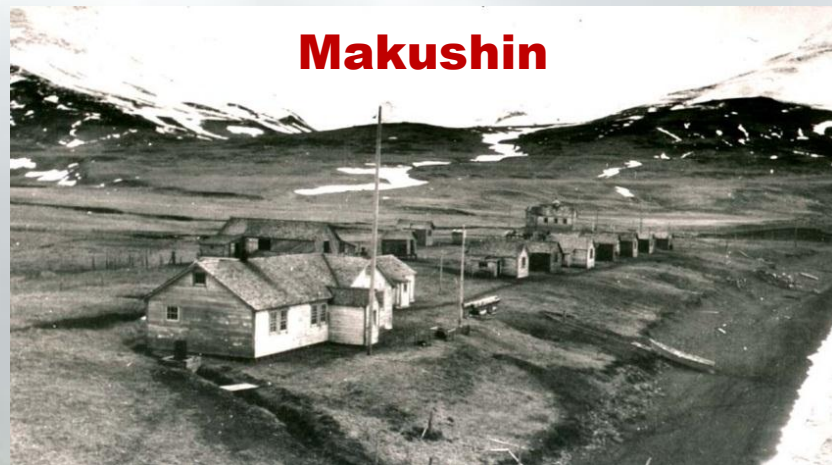


Four Unangan (Aleut) villages disappeared during World War II.

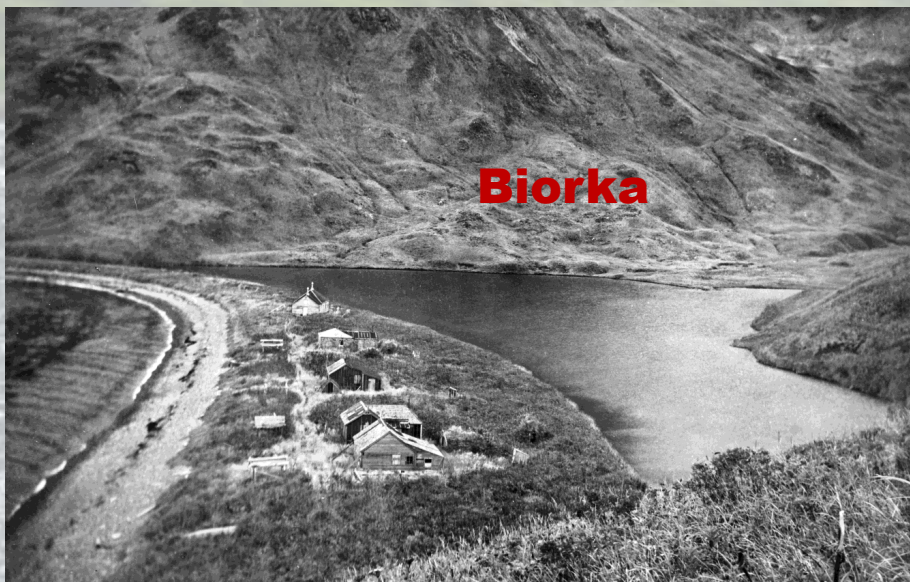
Kashega



Makushin



Biorka



Attu



The Lost Villages Project

Aleutian World War II National Historic Area

The project documents the history of the Unangan villages left behind in the evacuations and relocations of World War II, and never permanently resettled.



Ray Hudson interviewed five elders in 2004 about the lost villages in the Unalaska area.

- Nicholas Galaktionoff (Makushin and Biorka)
- Moses Gordieff (Biorka)
- Nicholas Lekanoff (Makushin)
- Irene Makarin (Biorka)
- Eva Tcheripanoff (Kashega)



Nick Galaktionoff remembered childhood days in Makushin.



“Makushin, that’s a good place for young kids. On the sand. Because Makushin face south, sunshine hit ‘em everyday. But lot of grass right in the front. Grass tall enough to play under, but somebody always scared us. Old Yakeem, Matfey’s brother. All dressed up with a horn on, come out making funny noise. We run like hell from the beach to home. I remember that. He didn’t want us to be on the beach too late but kids we’d stay on the beach and play around in the sand.”



Remote Aleutian islands

Before World War II the villages of Makushin, Kashega, Biorka and Attu were visited once or twice a year by boats bringing traders, priests, or medical and dental personnel.



Income in the villages came from the summer fur seal harvest in the Pribilofs, in addition to fox trapping and making baskets for sale



Alaska State Library - Historical Collections



The women stayed in the village and fished while the men worked in the Pribilofs



Ray Hudson: Now, Nick, what did the men do at Makushin in the summertime? Did they go up to the Pribilofs to work?

Nick Lekanoff: All the peoples goes to the Pribilofs, yes.

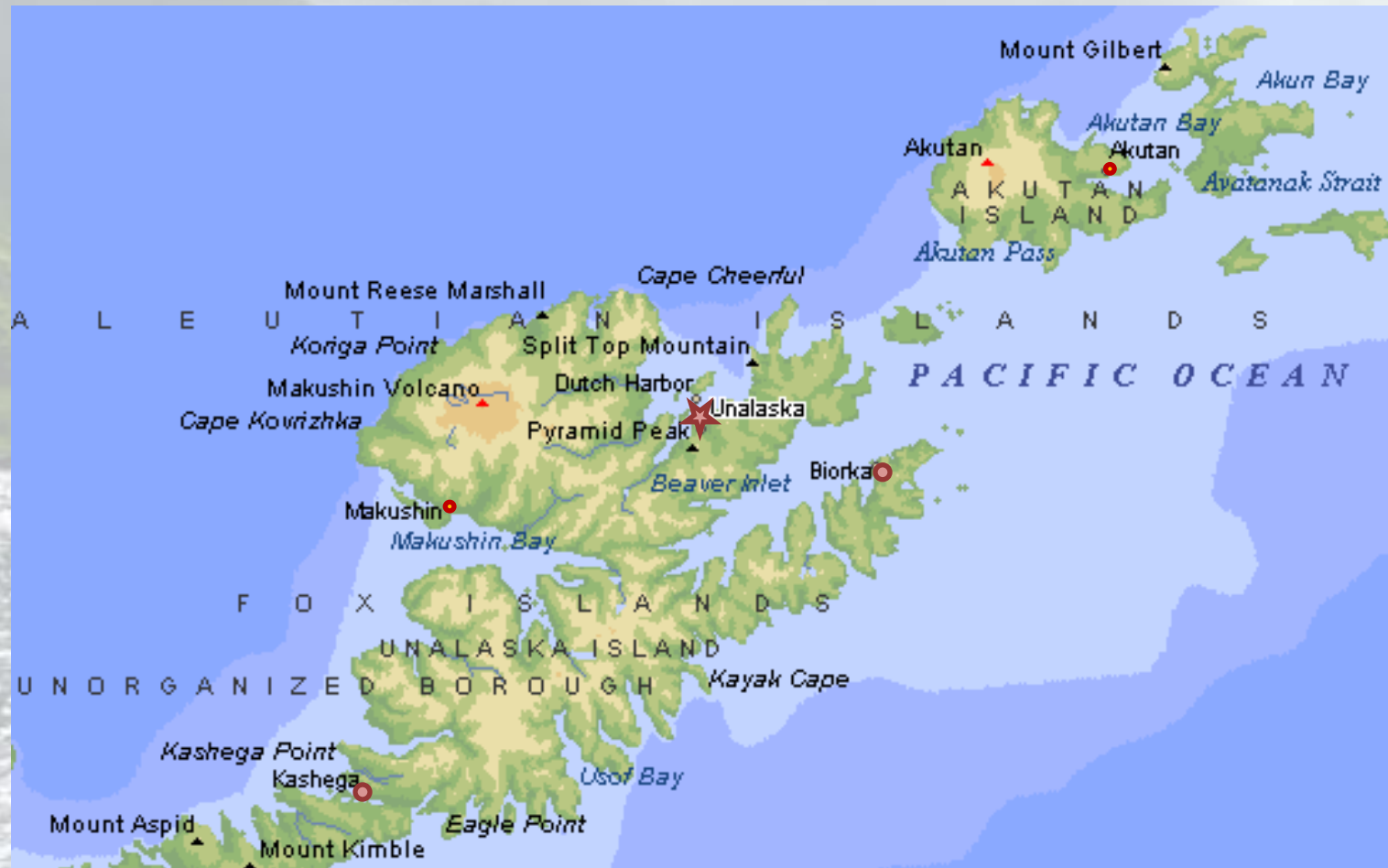
Ray: What did the women do then? Did they just stay in Makushin?

Nick: They just stay in the village there and go fishing or gaff. They used to gaff a fish out of the creek there and make a dry fish. And, seine. Pete Olsen had a seine so he let the biggest use it and go out seining right on the beach there. Get all the fish you want. It was a lot of work to it. Stay there and dry them and clean them out. Blue flies would get into them.

Ray: And when they came back from the Pribilofs, then?

Nick: They'd go out. Getting ready to go hunting. Get their kayaks out. In the barn there I counted, I think, they have five baidarkies there one time. Borenin and his brother had a baidarky, two man baidarky. And my godfather and his brother, he had one.

Unalaska served as a hub to several smaller villages, including Makushin, Kashega, and Biorka.

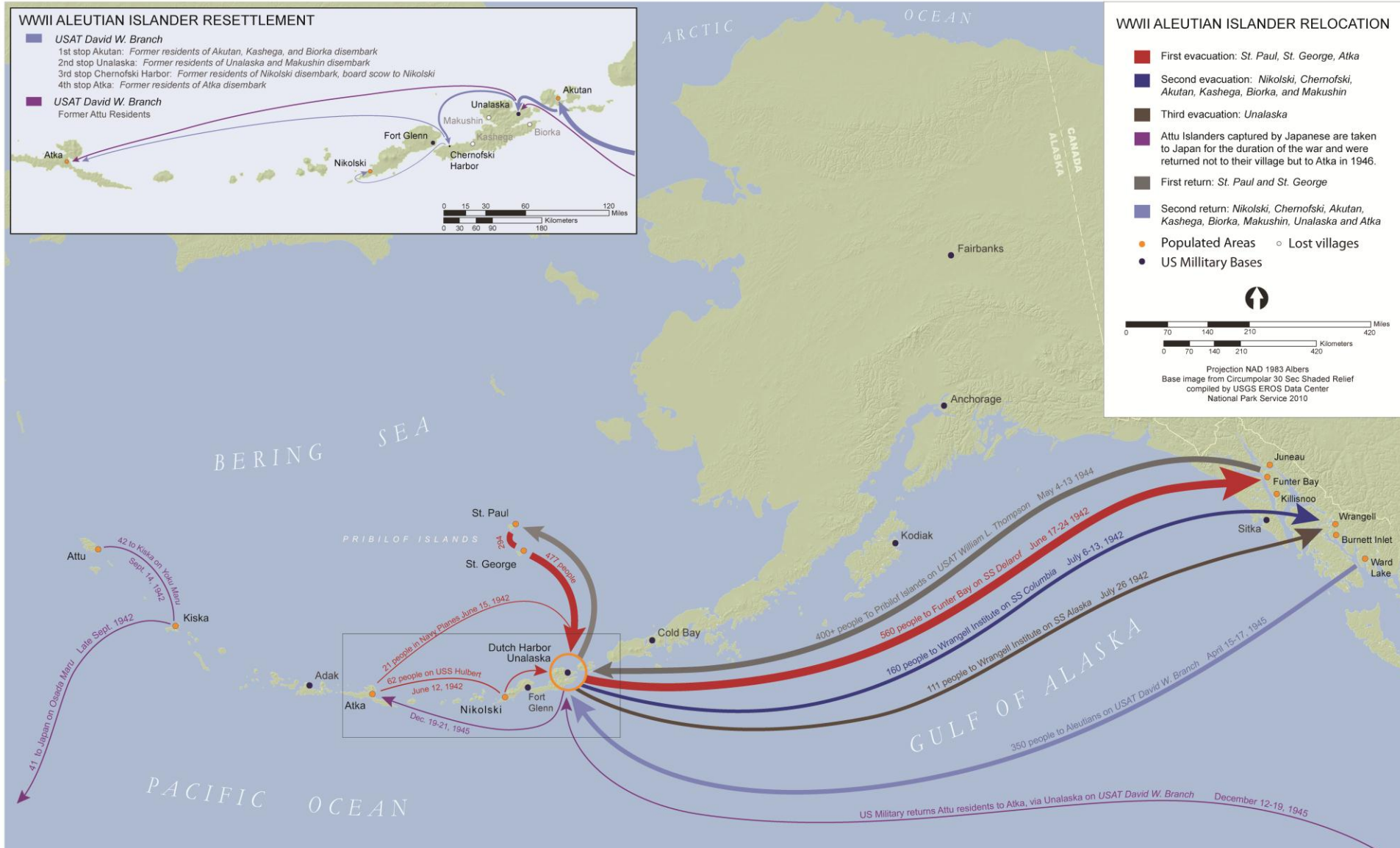


Unalaska was bombed on June 4, 1942

The Unalaska hospital, before and after the bombing



Unangan relocations during World War II



The Native people of the Aleutian Islands were taken by boat to Southeast Alaska.



Ships from the Alaska Steamship Company transported Unangan villagers to Southeast Alaska.

In July 1942, the *SS Columbia* picked up the residents of the smallest Aleutian villages: Kashega, Makushin, Biorka, Akutan and Nikolski.

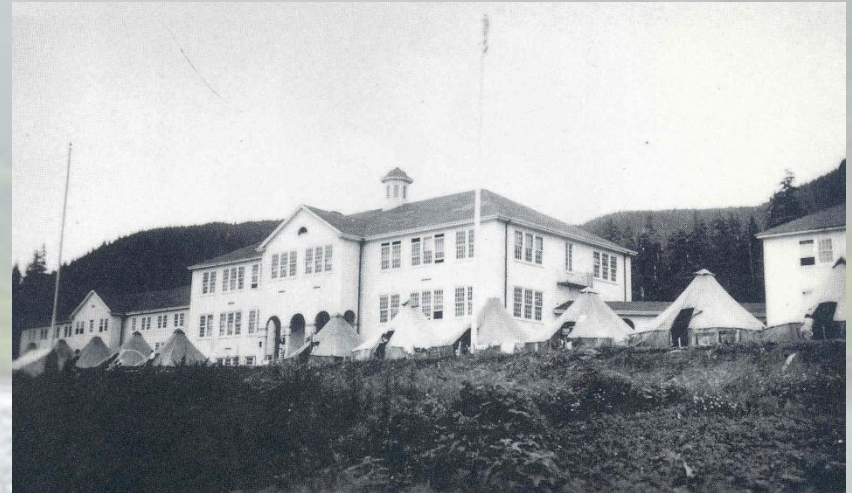


Menu for the *SS Columbia* on a cruise in May 1942

| | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| ★ <i>Menu</i> ★ | | |
| S. S. COLUMBIA | | |
| L. JACOBSEN, Commanding | | |
| Thursday May 28, 1942 | | |
| DINNER | | |
| Chow Chow | Deviled Egg Canape | Indian Relish |
| Chili Sauce | | Salted Peanuts |
| SOUP | | |
| Cream of Celery | | |
| FISH | | |
| Poached Fresh Alaska Halibut Egg Sauce | | |
| ENTREES | | |
| Boiled Corned Beef and Cabbage with New Potatoes | | |
| Calves Sweetbreads a la Rothschild | | |
| Apple Fritters Nutmeg Sauce | | |
| Roast Prime Ribs of Beef au Jus Yorkshire Pudding | | |
| Roast Domestic Goose with Dressing and Brown Gravy | | |
| VEGETABLES | | |
| Creamed Cauliflower | | |
| Snow Flake Potatoes | | Boiled Potatoes |
| Assorted Cold Meats with Potato Salad | | |
| SALAD | | |
| Garden Salad Spanish Dressing | | |
| DESSERT | | |
| Steamed Fruit Pudding Rum Sauce | | |
| Cherry Jello | Nabisco Wafers | Stewed White Figs |
| Huckleberry Pie | Assorted Cake | Assorted Cookies |
| Crystallized Ginger | | Candied Figs |
| CHEESE | | |
| American | Old English | Camembert |
| Cheese Served with Ritz Wafers | | |
| Cafe Noir | | |

Evacuation to Southeast Alaska

The boat crossed the Gulf of Alaska to Wrangell, where the evacuees stayed in dorms and tents for several weeks at a boarding school that was closed for the summer.



The residents of the smallest villages were sent to Ward Lake, a Civilian Conservation Corps camp built during the Depression near Ketchikan.



The food was not what people were used to eating.



Irene Makarin, age 11 at the time of evacuation: "My daddy told me to eat, I wouldn't eat anything. I never see cereal before, you know. All the foods right there, I never seen anything like that..."

They tried to let me eat, I wouldn't eat anything! Just cry! My daddy come over. 'You better eat something.' He talked Aleut to me. I turned around and told my dad, 'I want my fish, boiled fish!' [Laughs] 'So you can't have boiled fish. You got to eat.' I wouldn't eat. He have a hard time. All the Biorka kids, they have a hard time to eat breakfast."

Some Unangan got jobs in Ketchikan.

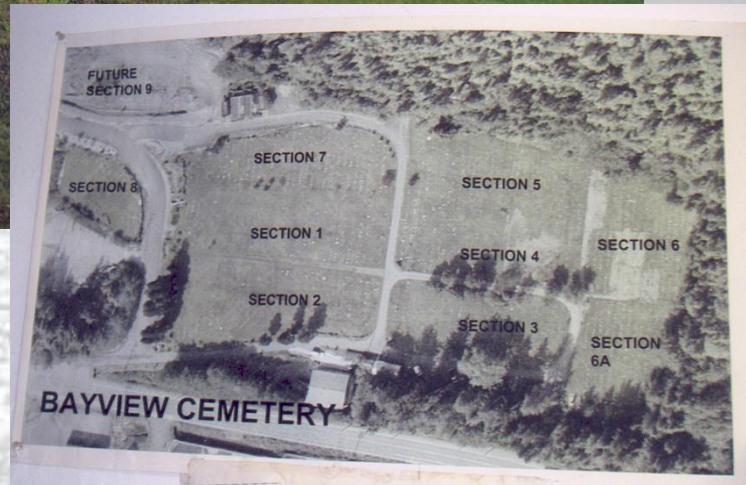
“Our men are finding jobs with Mr. Wacker’s help. There’s the promise of work maybe even through winter.

Some have hired on to the Creek Street Bridge. The rest leave early each morning for Ketchikan Cold Storage bring halibut heads home at night for us to cook.”

--Karen Hesse, *The Aleutian Sparrow* (2003)



The Bayview Cemetery in Ketchikan has a line of unmarked graves from deaths at the Ward Lake camp.



| | |
|-----|----------------|
| 282 | P. JACOBS |
| | 3-6-43 |
| 281 | S. BORENIN |
| | 3-15-43 |
| 280 | E. BORENIN |
| | 4-5-43 |
| 279 | E. BORENIN |
| | 3-31-43 |
| 278 | L. YATCHMINOFF |
| | 4-12-43 |
| 277 | E. PLEUTINKOFF |
| | 5-1-43 |
| 276 | SUZA |
| | CHERCASENS |
| | 5-25-43 |
| 275 | DORA |
| | BEZEZEKOFF |

When they returned to the Aleutians, some people were told their home villages were unfit for living.



The army troop ship *David W. Branch* brought 350 Unangan residents back to the Aleutians in 1945. Most of the Makushin, Biorka, and Kashega people were dropped off in Akutan.



George Borenin and Cornelius Kudrin decided to move back to Kashega after the war. They got along well in the early days of their resettlement effort.



George Borenin in Kashega, 1954



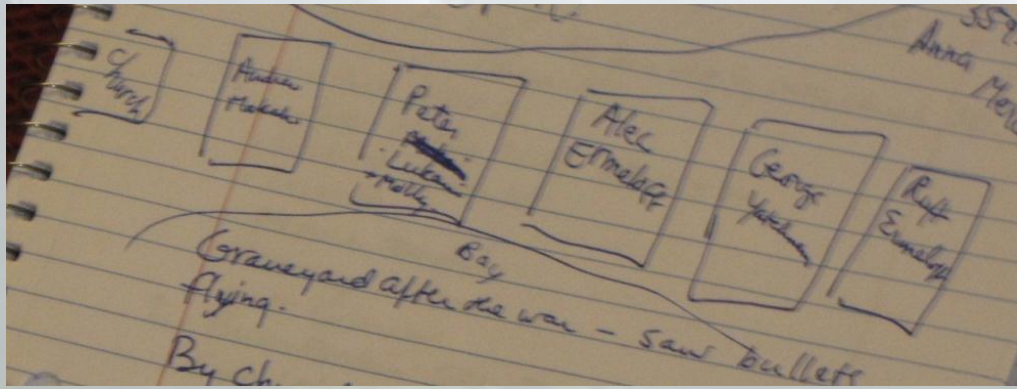
Andrew and Eustinia Makarin and friends in Unalaska in 1954



Photograph from Ted Bank II, American Institute for Exploration

GOOD FRIENDS AT UNALASKA IN 1954. Place of birth is shown in parentheses. Left to right: Eustina Makarin (Akutan), Andrew Makarin (Biorka), John Gordieff (Chernofski), Larry Mensoff (Akutan), Polly Philemonoff Mensoff (St. George), William Yatchmenoff (Kashega), Anfesia Shapsnikoff (Atka), Sophia Pletnikoff (Chernofski), Jenny Galaktionoff (Nikolski-old village), Pauline Lekanoff (Kashega), Agrifina Makarin (Akutan), Simeon Pletnikoff (Nikolski), Alex Ermeloff (Biorka), Molly Lukanin (Makushin).

The resettlers stayed at Biorka for several years.



Church

Andrew
and Ester
Makarin

Peter and
Molly
Lukanin

Alex and
Mary
Ermeloff

George and
Elsie
Yatchmenoff

Ruff and
Agapha
Ermeloff

Moses Gordieff: Andrew Makarin, his brother. And Andrew's wife, Eustina. Yeah, she was blind. Somebody was sick or something wrong with them, they used to call her. I remember I had trouble with my stomach or something. They had her come down and she used her hands, rubbing all over me for a long time.

Biorka's church



Andrew Makarin returned in 1965 and built a small house where the church's altar had been.



No one tried again to resettle Kashega, Makushin, or Biorka



Eva Tcheripanoff, in Unangam Tunuu and English: “I’m born in Kashega, and I used to play, play around. I had a rock, what they call it?--My uncle made a doll for me out of wood, when I used to play dolls, have a doll, rock doll. And, sea-eggs like, Unangam basket. Me and my grandma used to go out getting sea eggs, using that basket.”

The grass grew high in the summer except at Kashega, where wild cows grazed.



The *Tigla* – the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service research vessel



A boat trip to remember in September 2009



Makushin before World War II



Ray Hudson: So Pete Olsen was sort of a dictator in that village?

Nick Lekanoff: Yes, he was. He was running everybody because, well, he had a good business because the people there can't talk for themselves or they can't fight for themselves.

Makushin in 2009



Nick Lekanoff Sr. and descendants of Makushin



Only four people of the nine people evacuated from Makushin in 1942 returned to the Aleutians after the war.



Eva Borenin, age 15, stands with her adoptive mother Eva Borenin, age 55, in front of a tent at the Wrangell Institute. Both died in 1943 at Ward Lake and are buried in the Ketchikan cemetery.

Matrona Abloogalook, the youngest evacuee from Biorka, in Anchorage in 2008 with her great-niece Josephine Borenin-Shangin



One cross was planted at Makushin in September 2009, but weather prevented a visit to Kashega and the Kashega cross returned to Unalaska.

Brian and Sasha Rankin lifting the Kashega cross from the *Tiġlaˆx* to the dock



In September 2010, the passengers assembled in Unalaska for another trip to the lost villages—this time to Kashega and Biorka.



The Unangan Dancers, young people in Unalaska, performed several dances at a sendoff ceremony.



Mary Diakanoff and George Gordaoff shared memories of Kashega.



The *Tiğla* crew ferried us ashore in a Zodiac.



Arrival at Kashega



George Gordaoff at Kashega



The bridge the elders remember is gone, but the river is still there and was teeming with fish.



Eva Tcheripanoff's childhood memories of Kashega



"I tipped over one time...In the lake, up in Kashega. In the lake. I was riding—some people used to leave their baidarkies on the ground there, you know, upside down. Sometimes they tie 'em, sometimes they don't. And I was playing outside and I said, 'Why they did that?' Just, maybe I just liked to do it. I turned it over and pushed it down to the water. Then I jumped on it and I was just playing around. It was pretty far. Oh my goodness, I turned up!... And I can't get hold of it, you know, so I can stay on it. And I was just hollering, hollering, you know. Finally somebody must have heard me. Must have been Kudrin family heard me. Yeah, somebody came up. They took a baidarky down and picked me up."



Eva Tcheripanoff, Mrs. Alice Moller, and Tatiana Kudrin



Little Eva with her Uncle William



Eva Tcheripanoff: “Yeah, I go out hunting with him one time. Couple times, I think. More than that! I didn’t know you were supposed to hide away from the fox. And I was just standing and talking to him, you know. I seen him. He was kind of waving to me or something, you know. ‘I thought you told me to come.’ Here he told me to go down on the ground. I chased his fox away! Maybe he was mad at me, but he didn’t tell me.”



Starring at Kashega in the 1930s



Also in 1930, Carl Moller from Norway and his wife Oxenia (Alice) lived in Kashaga. Harry Jacobsen, also from Norway, was the storekeeper.

Form 1A-B
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
FIFTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1929
POPULATION—ALASKA

Judicial District Third
Recorder's District Alutian Islands District
Name of Institution _____

Enumeration District No. 3-27
Supervisor's District No. ALASKA
Enumerated by me on July 1, 1929 Edward K. Kipke, Enumerator

Sheet No. 11 B

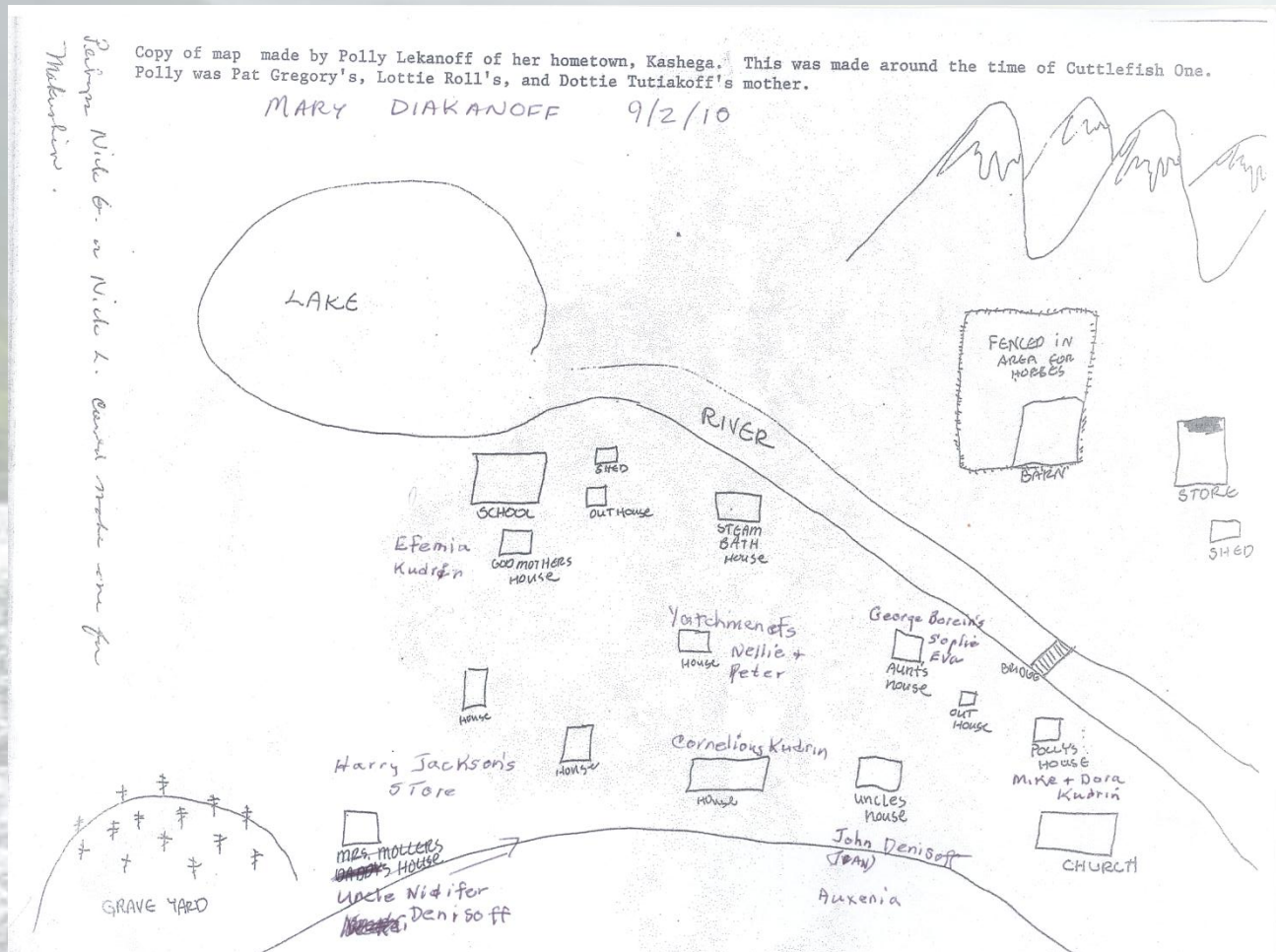
| PLACE OF ABODE | NAME | RELATION | PERSONAL DESCRIPTION | EDUCATION | PLACE OF BIRTH | | | CITIZENSHIP | OCCUPATION | VETERANS |
|----------------|---------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------|
| | | | | | PERSON | FATHER | MOTHER | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 26 | Indian, Peter | Son | M. Bu. 19. 8 | No | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 27 | Mike II | Son | M. Bu. 16. 8 | No | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 28 | Oga | Daughter | F. Bu. 13. 8 | No | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 29 | Sagei | Son | M. Bu. 10. 8 | No | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 30 | Sagei | Son | M. Bu. 5. 8 | No | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 31 | 99 Kootenai, George | Head | M. Bu. 32. 21 | Yes | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 32 | Mollie | Wife | F. Bu. 39. 21 | No | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 33 | Sumner | Son | M. Bu. 2. 21 | No | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 34 | 10 Miller, Charles | Head | M. W. 40. 21 | Yes | Norway | Norway | Norway | 1915 | Teacher | No 7876 |
| 35 | Oxenia | Wife | F. Bu. 17. 21 | Yes | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | XXXX |
| 36 | 11 Jacobsen, Harry | Head | M. W. 59. 21 | Yes | Norway | Norway | Norway | 1905 | Store Manager | No 9191 |
| 37 | 12 Kootenai, George | Head | M. Bu. 37. 21 | Yes | Alutian | Alutian | Alutian | | None | |
| 38 | Calith | Wife | F. W. 30. 21 | Yes | Mississippi | Mississippi | Mississippi | | Teacher | No 9191 |
| 39 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 40 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 41 | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 49 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 50 | | | | | | | | | | |

Under the enumeration of Kashaga Village

Mary Moller Diakanoff in Kashega with Carlene Arnold and Mary's daughter Evonne Mason



Map of Kashega: Made by Polly Lekanoff in the 1980s, amended by Mary Diakanoff in 2010



Efemia Kudrin and her five youngest children around the time of evacuation (1942)



Standing -
Sergie (21), Peter
Kudrin (30), Mike (27)

Seated -
George (17) Efemia
(57), Olga (24)

Olga's daughter Jane Mensoff, George's daughters Eva Kudrin and Ruth Kudrin, and Ruth's daughter Anesia Kudrin.



Exploring the Kashega village site, the visitors picked berries and flowers to bring to those who weren't able to come on the boat trip.





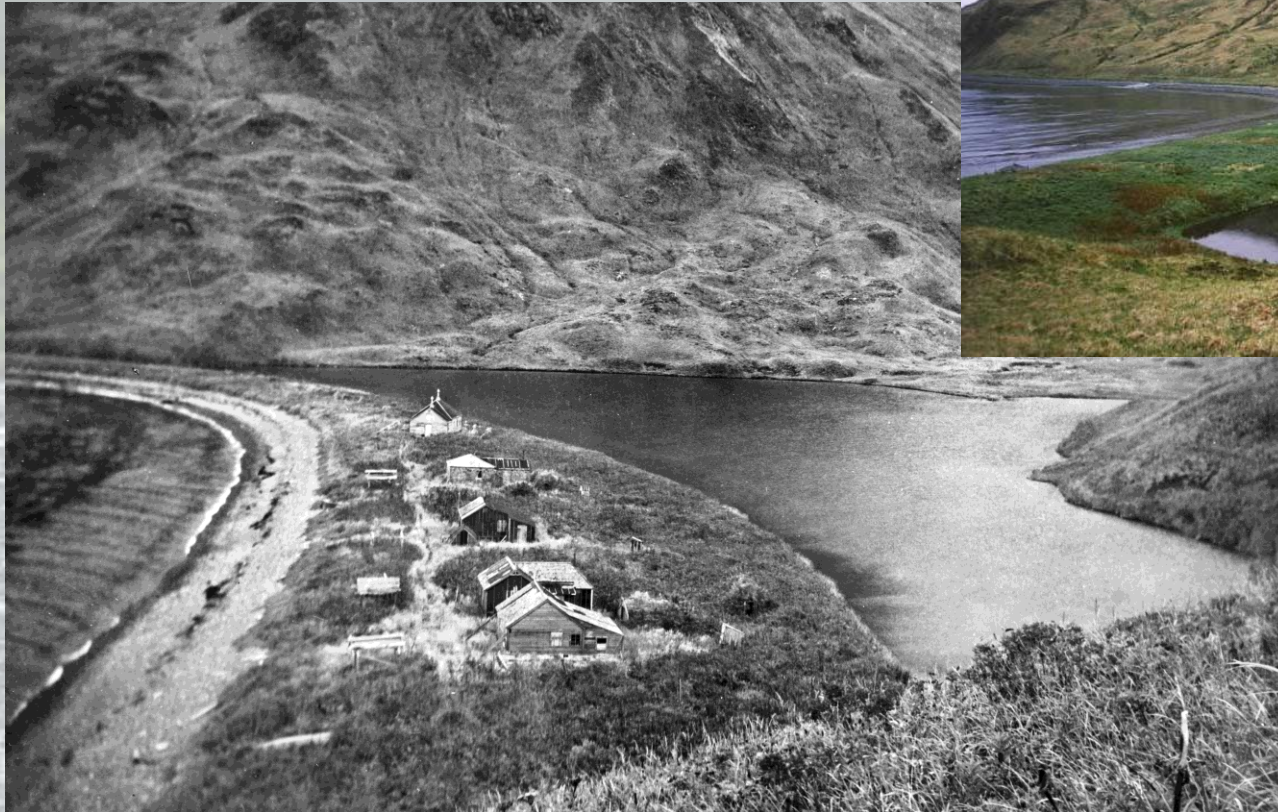
Return from Kashega



Arrival at Biorka



Biorka before World War II, and as it looks today



Kathy Dirks in Biorka

Kathy's grandparents were Andrew and Eustina Makarin. Her mother was Irene Makarin.



In 1943, Biorka was empty and desolate. Foxes, untrapped the past winter, were living in some of the houses.

“When the natives were suddenly evacuated they left many of their goods behind. Their looted houses were almost lost in two seasons' growth of petrusky and the long coarse grasses that were reclaiming the village to the wilderness...

Biorka won't be a nice place for my Aleut friends to come home to.”—a visitor in 1943 (Nutchuk [Simeon Oliver] 1946: 217)

Part of a house remained in 2010, probably Andrew Makarin's house.





Memory Eternal



Memories of Biorka



Ray Hudson: Was Biorka a good place to get salmonberries and blueberries in the summertime?

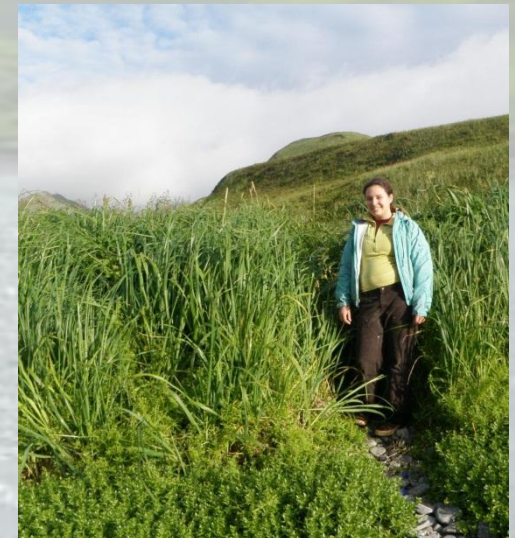
Irene Makarin: Oh my golly, they got lots. They got big blueberries and big salmonberries, mossberries. All over Biorka. Holy smokes... I like to go over there in the summer time for berries. And they got lots of silvers.



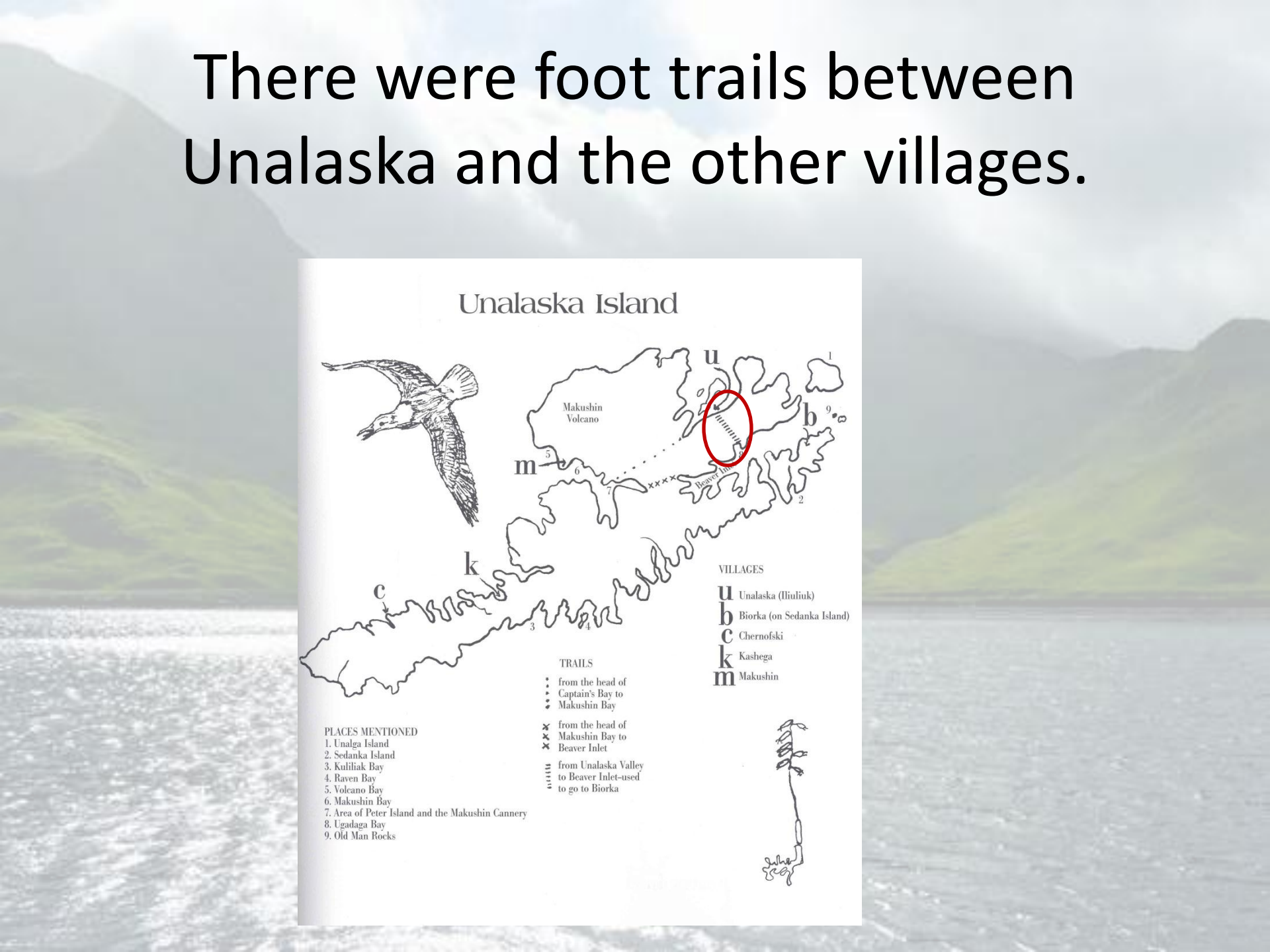


Trail to Ugadaga Bay

The people in Biorka used to bring fox furs and baskets to sell in Unalaska. They took a dory to Ugadaga Bay, then carried their wares several miles up the trail. They returned to their boat carrying groceries and housewares to bring back to the village.



There were foot trails between Unalaska and the other villages.



The graves of Peter and Nellie Yatchmenoff



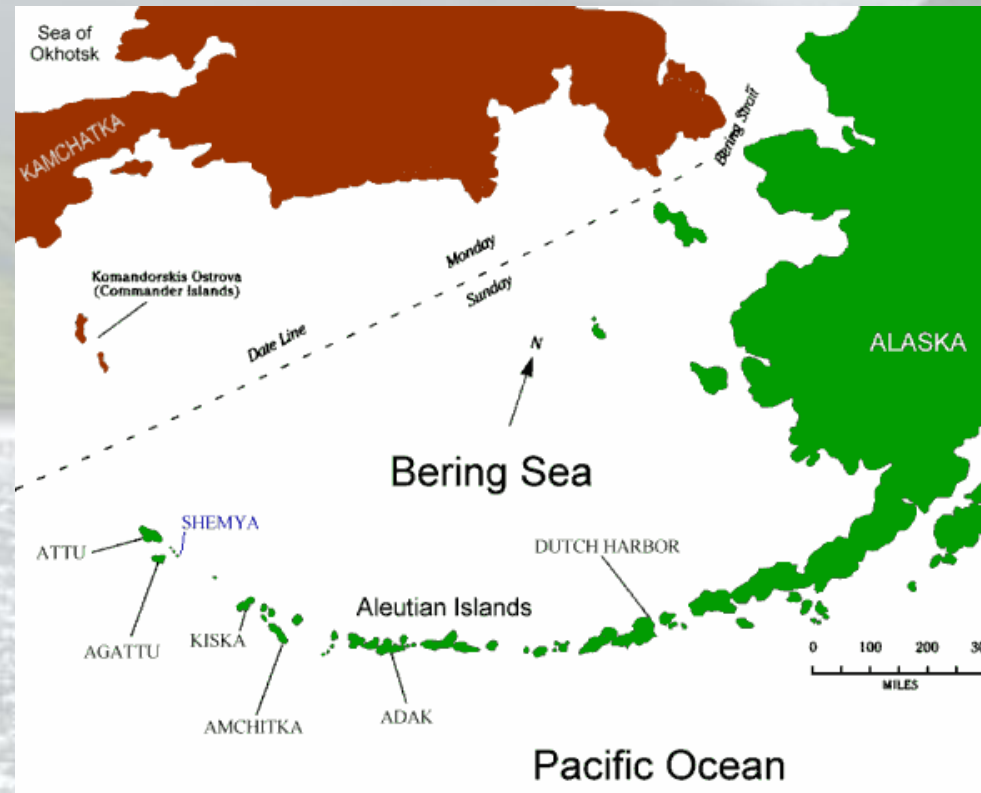
The Attuans were taken to Japan and held captive there during World War II.



Attu before World War II



Attu is one of the “Near” Islands,
meaning that it is near Asia.



Row of Attu houses with church





ATTU NATIVES - 10, JULY 1935

Attu's old church



Attu's new church, built in 1932



Mike Hodikoff, the Chief, was the most well-known Attu resident of the early 20th century.



Mike and son George (Gorga)



Mary Breu's book about her great-aunt Etta Jones, *Last Letters from Attu*, was published in 2009.

Attu school

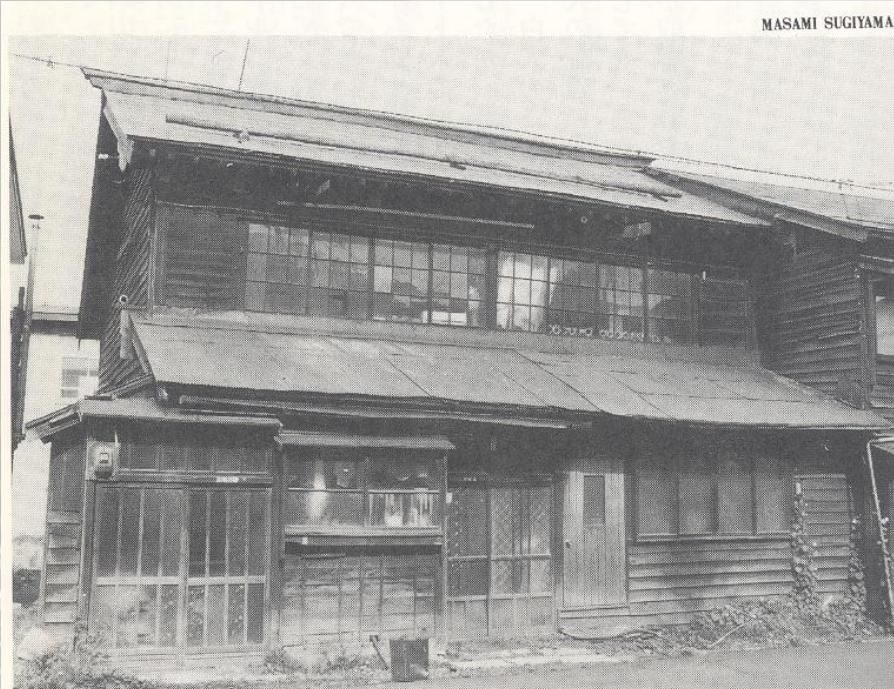
Etta Jones in 1953



42 Attuans were taken to Japan in
September 1942.



The Attuans were taken to the city of Otaru, on Hokkaido Island



45年前(昭和17年秋), アリュート人が収容されていた民家がそのまま残っていた

This building in Otaru housed the forty Attu natives in 1942 after their evacuation from the island. After one year there they were given a larger home on a hill in another part of the city.



Many of the Attuans who died suffered from malnutrition.

Artumonoff, John – b. 1882, d. 1942 on Attu

Artumonoff, Mavra – b. 1924, d. 1944

Artumonoff, Peter – 23, b. 1920, d. 1944

Borenin, Annie Golodoff – b. 1919, d. 1943

Golodoff, Artelion “Arty” (Angelina’s baby, b. and d. 1943 in Japan)

Golodoff, Harman (Garman) – 55, b. 1888, d. 1945

Golodoff, Helen, b. 1929, d. 1944

Golodoff, Lavrenti – b. 1900, d. 1945

Golodoff, Leonti, b. 1931, d. 1943

Golodoff, Mary – b. 1895, d. 1943

Golodoff, Michael (Julia’s baby, b. and died 1943 in Japan)

Golodoff, Valvigian (Valirjian) – b. 1939 , d. 1943

Hodikoff, Anecia (Mike H.’s baby, b. and d. 1943 in Japan)

Hodikoff, Fred (Fedosay) – b. 1901, d. 1945

Hodikoff, George – 17, b. 1929, d. 1945

Hodikoff, Michael Gorga “Mike” (Chief) – b. 1893, d. 1945

Lokanin, Gabriel (Mike L.’s baby, b. and d. 1944 in Japan)

Lokanin, Tatiana – b. 1941, d. 1944

Prokopioff, Anecia Kriukov (Golodoff) – b. 1886, d. 1942 while under way for Japan.

Prokopioff, Mary – b. 1929, d. 1943

Prosoff, Bladimir – b. 1932, d. 1943

Prosoff, Martha Hodikoff – b. 1903, d. 1943

When the war was over, the Attuans were
“discovered” in Otaru.

Nick Golodoff, age 9 in 1945: “As the end of the war approached, we were still in Japan. The policeman told us the war was over and we painted POW on the outside of our building so the American planes would know where we were. The planes flew over and looked around and saw it, and then the next day they came back with drums filled with food, all kinds of food, and they dropped the drums from the plane with a parachute. Their aim was not very good. Some drums filled with food fell into one of the Japanese houses and the policeman had to go and collect them....[W]e ate well that day. Everything tasted good to me. I really liked the canned peaches.”

Twenty-five Attuans survived the war and returned to the United States.

Children from Attu receiving communion in Seattle



Only 11 people were settled in Atka.

Five of the young people orphaned by the war were taken to Eklutna.



The five Aleut children, Serje, John and Angelina in the back row above, Mariana and Martha in front, trimmed their first Christmas tree at Eklutna.

Soldier Kanami and Nick Golodoff—in 1942 and in 1992



Nick Golodoff has been writing a book about his memories of Japan, *Attu Boy*, with the help of his granddaughter Brenda Maly.

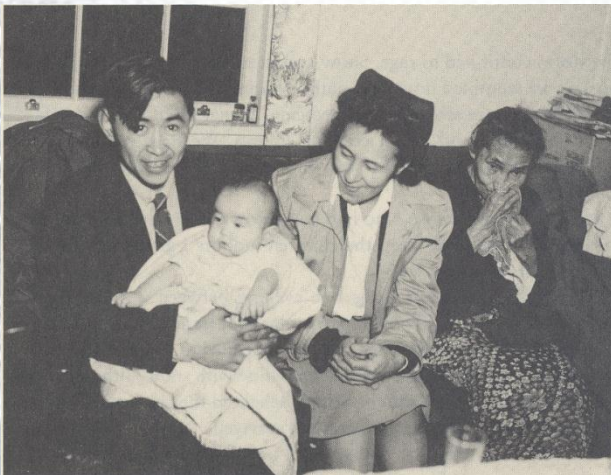


The National Park Service is working with Nick to edit and publish *Attu Boy*.

The book will include other first-person accounts and memories of Japan:

- Innokenty Golodoff (Nick's uncle)
- Olean Prokopieff (Nick's mother)
- Mike Lukanin
- Alex Prosoff

Photo by Ethel Ross Oliver, 1946-1947



Olean Prokopieff



Photo by Lael Morgan,
1972

Masami Sugiyama “Sam” visited Atka in the 1980s and published a book in Japan about the Attuans’ experiences .



One English title for Sugiyama’s book is “On the Trail of the Picture,” referring to the famous picture of Soldier Kanami and young Nick.

Professor Hiroko Harada, UAA, has translated portions of this book to contribute to the Attu volume.

Attu in 2012

The next village return trip is to Attu. We are seeking funding to bring former residents and descendants of Attu first to Shemya by air, then to Attu by boat.



The trip is planned for the summer of 2012, 70 years after the Japanese invaded Attu (June 7, 1942) and took the Attu residents to Hokkaido (about September 15, 1942).



Greg and Elizabeth Golodoff in 1946-1947

Thank you



- Aleutian Pribilof Heritage Group
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, especially crew of the *Tigla^x*
- Ounalashka Corporation
- Qawalangin Tribe
- Photos: Lauren Adams, Carlene Arnold, R. Gregory Dixon, Roberta Gordaoff, Gregory Jones, O. Patricia Lekanoff-Gregory, Jane Mensoff, A. B. Rankin

